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AN ITALIAN CRITIC ON ANGLO-SAXON ART

DESIRING to be fair, The Lotus Magazine reprints as an addition to its notice of the Academy, an estimate formed by Diego Angeli, one of the leading Italian critics, of the American and English exhibits in the International Exposition in Rome. Americans themselves have been severe in their comments on the exhibition of American art in Rome. The Italian critic, however, treats it with respect. His comments, which were published in the Tribuna Roma, were called to the attention of Mr. H. K. Bush-Brown, who translated them for Art and Progress, the official journal of the American Federation of Art.

“I do not really know by what word to define the Anglo-Saxon people whose art is like the reflection of their own good government and high moral standards. Perhaps it may be that the English and North American art lacks passion, but in compensation there is in it a great manifestation of family affection, loyalty, personal appreciation, and other qualities which demonstrate the power of the race. There is also another element that, among the Latins—especially us Italians—must cause surprise. The Anglo-Saxon artists, good or mediocre as the case may, start with the premise that to be painters they must have learned first of all how to paint. Upon this basis their school is founded and it is this which

has given it quality and distinction after the same manner as a uniform aspiration forms the essence of the race.

“Coming out of the English and American pavilions one has a sensation of respect such as that produced by a chance meeting with a worthy person. It is an honest people that produce so honest an art—a powerful people that produce so serene an art—a people who see their purpose before them and know how to reach it without losing themselves in idle considerations or artificial exultations. * * * More than this, there is another element of strength in Anglo-Saxon art—its chastity. By affirming this I do not intend to imply Puritanism. Titian’s Venus, in all its nudity of Italian art, is as chaste as a Madonna.”

In conclusion, after a more intimate scrutiny of the various epochs of English art, he adds: “The English and American pavilions resemble each other in a singular way—the essence of light itself and the soul of the Anglo-Saxon. That which is most admirable in their art is in reality the reflection of the individuality of the race. These portraits, landscapes, and interiors are of men and things essentially English and American, and give expression to sentiments found in their books, in their national life, and in nature, for which they have a great love. In an epoch in which all are searching to be what they are not, the English and Americans wave with pride the stars and stripes of the Union, or the superimposed crosses of England, Scotland and Ireland, to the four winds the world.”